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Caribbean Regional Security

by Ivelaw L. Griffith

Sovereignty and Consensus

Defining the security concerns of the Caribbean and developing strategies for dealing with these concerns vary considerably among its nations. Yet there are certain "realities" affecting that security upon which most analysts and policy makers find consensus. These realities include: the multidimensionality of security, the saliency of drugs to security, and the necessity for cooperation.

Security is Multidimensional

Security in the Caribbean has not been viewed just as protection from external military threats, or as military force, equipment, or even military activity. Security is multidimensional, with military, political, economic, and environmental dimensions.

The Caribbean approach to security has been concerned not only with protection from external threats; the internal arena is very much part of the security purview. Moreover, the prevailing view does not focus on the state as the only unit of analysis. Non-state actors are equally important. Some non-state actors have more assets than those of some Caribbean nations. For instance, the operating budgets of some cruise lines are larger than those of several Eastern Caribbean states combined. Moreover, some drug traffickers have more and better weapons than some law enforcement agencies in the region.

Drugs are the Primary Threat

There is near-universal agreement among officials in various Caribbean, North American, and European capitals that the top security concerns of the region are drug production, consumption and abuse, trafficking, and money laundering. The Caribbean has the misfortune of being close to South America, a major drug supply source, and to North America, a major drug demand area. Most of the world's cocaine is produced in South America, and a significant amount of its heroin and marijuana also comes from South and Central America. And, the United States has the dubious distinction of being the world's largest drug consuming nation. Yet, not all the drugs trafficked through the Caribbean are destined for North America. Europe is also a huge drug consumer, and a considerable amount of the drugs consumed there comes through the Caribbean. A glimpse at drug seizures over the past five years (see Table 1) indicates the scope and scale of trafficking.

Other narcotics problems are drug production, consumption and abuse, and money laundering. Although the three main "danger drugs" in the Caribbean are cocaine, heroin, and marijuana, only marijuana is

produced there. Jamaica, St. Vincent and the Grenadines, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and St. Lucia are among the countries with the highest marijuana production. Drug consumption and abuse are not limited to any social or economic group. Marijuana, for example, is predominantly a working class drug of choice. Crack cocaine is widespread among lower and middle class people because it is cheap and has the attributes of being "hard" and a "status" drug. Heroin, on the other hand, is a rich man's drug. Apart from the cost factor, the impact of heroin abuse in the region has been mitigated by a needle phobia in the region. Like production, drug abuse differs from place to place. The greatest drug abuse problems are in Puerto Rico, Jamaica, the Dominican Republic, Belize, Guyana, Trinidad and Tobago, and in parts of the Eastern Caribbean.

Money laundering is another aspect of the narcotics phenomenon. Indeed, it is partly the money laundering "reputation" of the Caribbean that made Anguilla the choice for Operation Dinero, a major money laundering under-cover operation that ran from January 1992 through December 1994. By the time the operation ended, U.S. and British authorities had seized nine tons of cocaine and \$90 million worth of cash and assets. They also made 116 arrests and gathered a wealth of intelligence on world-wide drug trafficking and money laundering operations. Caribbean countries are vulnerable to money laundering because of their relative political stability, bank secrecy, low taxation, and relatively well-developed telecommunications. Indeed, these factors are vital to one sector that is critical to the economies of many natural-resource-poor Caribbean countries: the off-shore financial services sector.

Table 1
Caribbean Drug Seizures 1991-1995
(kilos)

Country	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995
Antigua- Barbuda	C na	500	na	130	110
Bahamas	M na	10,095	3,380	217	
Belize	C 5,280	4,800	1,800	480	390
	M 1,180	1,000	650	1,420	3,530
Br. Virgin Is.	C 13	850	100	140	840
	M 800	5,200	93,000	4,800	2,800
Dominican Republic	C 15	24	709	450	1,194
	M na	na	na	1,000	235
Guyana	C 1,810	2,350	1,070	2,800	3,600
	M 400	6,450	310	6,800	na
Haiti	C 7	41	463	76	51
	M na	93,000	15,600	54,800	10,900
Jamaica	C 188	56	157	716	550
	M 330	na	2,520	500	na
Trinidad and Tobago	C 60	490	160	180	570
	M 4,900	3,500	7,500	4,600	3,720
Tinidad and Tobago	C na	na	na	311	110
	M na	na	na	3,977	1,634

Legend: C = Cocaine M = Marijuana na = not available

Source: Department of State, *International Narcotics Control Strategy Report*
{Various Years}

Yet, drugs do not constitute a security matter simply because of the multidimensionality of drug

operations. They do so essentially for four reasons:

- these operations have multiple consequences and implications such as marked increases in crime, systemic and institutionalized corruption, and arms trafficking
- the operations and their consequences have increased in scope and gravity over the last decade
- they have dramatic impact on agents and agencies of national security and good government in military, political, and economic ways
- the sovereignty of many countries is severely tested and subject to infringement, by both state and non-state actors, because of drugs.

Cooperation is Critical

Caribbean countries cannot cope alone with the threats presented by drugs. Due to the transnational nature of the drug trade, collaboration between states is a practical necessity if not always a political desire.

**Table 2
1996 Multinational Interdiction Operations in the Caribbean**

Operations	Dates	Participating Nations	Naval and Air Assets
Caribe Storm 1-96	Jan. 9-18	US, Netherlands, UK St. Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla, France	USCG Cutters Forward, Attu, Nunivak, Ocracoke, and Pt. HNLHM Abraham Crjnsen, Stalwart (St. Kitts-Nevis), Dc (Anquilla), NL P-3/F-27 aircraft, UC-26 French Customs a
Caribe Storm 2-96	Jan. 29- Feb. 6	US, UK, France, Netherlands St. Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla, St. Lucia, Barbados	HNLHM Abraham Crjnsen, HMS Brave, FRA Oakleaf, L Cutters Mohawk, Vason, Forward, Harriett Lane, Ocracook and Nunivak, USS Obannon, USN & NL P-3s/F-27s, Briti Islands Police aircraft, UC-26 French Customs aircraft, U Branch Embarded HH-65s & Lynx helicopters
Caribe Venture 3-96	May 12-26	US, Netherlands, France, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla, St. Lucia, Barbados	USCG Cutters Harriett Lane, Attu, and Nunivak, HNLHM Crjnsen, HMS Argyll, FRA Oakleaf, Canot (France), Pin Doris (Fr), Tyrrel Bay (Grenada), Stalwart (St. Kitts-Nevis) (Anguilla), Defender (St. Lucia), Trident (Barbados)
Caribe Venture 4-96	Aug. 30 - Sept. 20	US, Netherlands, France, Grenada, St. Kitts-Nevis, Anguilla, St. Lucia, Barbados	USCG Cutters Thetis, Forward, Bear, Escanaba, Nunivak, and Ocracoke, HNLHM Willem Van Der Zaan, Canot (Fr) Doris (Fr), Tyrrel Bay (Grenada), Stalwart (St. Kitts-Nevis) (Anguilla), Defender (St. Lucia), Trident (Barbados)

Source: U.S. Coast Guar

**Table 3
Caribbean Security Who's Who**

Country	Head of State/Govt	Military	Head of Military	Police	He
Anguilla	Hubert B. Hughes (CM)	NONE ¹	NA	Royal Anguilla Police Force+	Cor Don
Antigua & Barbuda	Lester B. Bird (PM)	Antigua-Barbuda Defense Force	LT. Col. Trevor A. Thomas, Commandant	Royal Antigua-Barbuda Police Force+	Cor Con
Aruba	Jan Hendrick Eman (PM)	NONE ²	NA	Aruba Police Corps+	Cor Luc
Bahamas	Hubert A. Ingraham (PM)	Royal Bahamas Defense Force	Commodore Leon Smith (CoS)	Royal Bahamas Police Force+	Cor Bert

Barbados	Owen S. Arthur (PM)	Barbados Defense Force*	Brig. Hubyard Lewis (CoS)	Royal Barbados Police Force*	Corr Grar
Belize	Manuel Esquivel (PM)	Belize Defense Force	Brig. Earl E. Arthurs (CoS)	Belize Police Force*	Corr Omi
British Virgin Islands	Ralph T. O'Neal (CM)	NONE ¹	NA	Royal Virgin Islands Police Force+	Corr Ver
Cayman Islands	John W. Owen (G)	NONE ²	NA	Royal Cayman Islands Police	Corr Anil
Cuba	Fidel Castro Ruiz (P)	Revolutionary Armed Forces	Gen. Ulises Rosales del Toro (CoGS)	Revolutionary National Police	Brig Bea
Dominica	Edison James (PM)	NONE ³	NA	Commonwealth of Dominica Police Force	Corr Desi
Dominican Republic	Leonel Fernández Reyna (P)	Dominican Armed Forces	Rear Adm. Ruben Paulino Alvarez (GCoS)	Dominican National Police	Dire
French Guiana	Jean-François Corrat (PFT)	NONE ⁴	NA	Royal Grenada Police Force*	Corr Lt. C
Grenada	Keith C. Mitchel (PM)	NONE ⁵	NA	Guyana Police Force+	Corr Laur
Guadeloupe	Michel Diefenbacher (PFT)	NONE ⁶	NA	Haitian National Police	Dir. Pieh
Guyana	Samuel A. Hinds (P)	Guyana Defense Force	Brig. Joseph Singh (CoS)	Jamaica Constabulary Force+	Corr Fran
Haiti	René Préval (P)	NONE ⁷	NA	Royal Montserrat Police+	Corr Fran
Jamaica	Percival J. Patterson (PM)	Jamaica Defense Force	Rear Adm. Peter Brady** (CoS)	Netherlands Antilles Police Corps	Hea WA
Martinique	Michel Morin (PFT)	NONE ⁸	NA	Puerto Rico Dept. of Police	Supl
Montserrat	Bertrand Osborne (CM)	NONE ¹	NA	Royal St. Kitts and Nevis Police Force*	Cor Brat
Netherlands Antilles	Miguel A. Poulin (PM)	NONE ²	NA	Royal St. Lucia Police Force+	Cor Vern
Puerto Rico	Pedro Rosselló (G)	NONE ⁷	NA	Royal St. Vincent and the Grenadines Police Force*	Cor Rani
St. Kitts-Nevis	Denzil Douglas (PM)	NONE ⁹	NA	Suriname Police Corps	Com Carl
St. Lucia	Vaughan A. Lewis (PM)	NONE	NA	Trinidad and Tobago Police Service	Com Kent
St. Vincent and the Grenadines	James F. Mitchell (PM)	NONE	NA	Royal Turks and Caicos Police+	Com Paul
Suriname	Jules A. Wijdenbosch (P)	Suriname National Army	Col. Glenn Sedney Commander	Virgin Islands Dept. of Public Safety++	Com Ram
Trinidad and Tobago	Basdeo Panday (PM)	Trinidad and Tobago Defense Force	Brig. Carl Alonso (CoDS)		
Turks and Caicos	Hugh Derek Taylor (CM)	NONE ¹	NA		
U.S. Virgin Islands	Roy L. Schneider (G)	NONE ⁹	NA		

Notes:

CM Chief Minister
 CoDS Chief of Defense Staff
 CoGS Chief of General Staff
 CoS Chief of Staff
 G Governor
 GCoS General Chief of Staff
 NA Not Applicable
 P President
 PFT Prefect
 PM Prime Minister

- 1 - Defense is the responsibility of the United Kingdom
- 2 - Defense is the responsibility of the Netherlands.
- 3 - Belize had an army from November 1975 to April 1981, when it was disbanded.
- 4 - Defense is the responsibility of France. The French army's Forces Armées aux Antilles is headed by Gen. Hélye, the Principal Commissioner of Police in the French West Indies is Thierry Ansey.
- 5 - Grenada's People Revolutionary Army was created in March 1979 and disbanded in October 1983, following the Haitian military — Forces Armées d'Haiti (FAZH) — was demobilized between November 1994 and April 1995.
- 6 - Defense is the responsibility of the United States, and there is the Puerto Rican National Guard (U.S.), headed by Col. John Simmonds.
- 7 - Defense is the responsibility of the United States, and there is the Puerto Rican National Guard (U.S.), headed by Col. John Simmonds.
- 8 - The St. Kitts-Nevis Defense Force, which had been created in January 1968, was disbanded in September 1997.
- 9 - Defense is the responsibility of the United States, but there is the Virgin Islands National Guard, headed by G Coaz-Col n.
- + Member of the Association of Caribbean Commissioners of Police (ACCP).
- ++ ACCP membership applies only to Curacao and St. Martin.
- +++ ACCP membership applies only to St. Thomas.
- * Member of the Regional Security System.
- ** Col. John Simmonds is Acting Chief of Staff (between September 1996 and August 1997) while Rear Adm. Br professional development.

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Also, Caribbean states have such capability limitations-financial, technical, manpower, training, etc-as to preclude the conduct of successful narcotics countermeasures individually. The situation is aggravated by the fact that foreign assistance from some states is declining due to budgetary constraints and the political and popular antipathy towards foreign aid. This underscores the importance of pursuing partnerships with non-governmental as well as international governmental organizations.

Cooperation itself presents challenges. One of these challenges stems from the capability limitations. The capability challenge does not arise merely because of the financial, equipment or other constraints. It does so mainly because inherent in the capability disparities of cooperating states is the need for those with fewer limitations to give relatively more to the cooperative effort. This is not always achievable because some relatively better-off states are unwilling to commit to collective efforts because they are unsure that there will be commensurate national interest returns. Often, domestic factors make it difficult for national leaders to make or honor pledges.

There is also the sovereignty challenge. The capability disparities among partnership states in any group are a reflection of the power asymmetries within the group. Sovereignty tends to be more closely guarded by the least powerful states, for understandable reasons. Powerful partners should pay attention to sovereignty issues in dealing with the group.

Yet another challenge is the bureaucratic politics challenge. Although-or perhaps, because-the partnership states have adopted an inter-agency approach to fighting drugs, this challenge is not to be overlooked. There will be jurisdictional turf battles involving army and police, foreign ministry and national security ministry, army intelligence units and police intelligence, etc. These difficulties can undermine counternarcotics pursuits within a single country. Thus, the potential dangers involved when several states and agencies are involved are increased. (See Table 3.) All partnership actors and agencies should be constantly mindful of these dangers, and act to subordinate agency interest to achieving the common good: fighting the enemy-within, around, and without.

Despite several significant instances of cooperation in fighting drugs in the region, there is disgruntledness in some Caribbean security circles about the one-sidedness of the intelligence sharing relationship with the United States. Some of the disgruntledness is justifiable. Nevertheless, Caribbean countries benefit from U.S. intelligence exchanges such as the Caribbean Law Enforcement and Intelligence Committee (CLEIC), which brings together several British, Caribbean, Dutch, French, and U.S. law enforcement officials monthly in Puerto Rico. However, the reluctance of U.S. and other authorities to share intelligence is sometimes based on realistic concerns about the integrity of Caribbean security agencies, because of corruption, operational constraints, and inefficiency.

Most Caribbean countries have signed Mutual Legal Assistance Treaties (MLATs) with the United States. MLATs cover various subjects, including intelligence, asset sharing, material and technical support, and interdiction. Interdiction includes "shipboarding," "shipriding," and "overflight." Up to the end of December 1996 there were interdiction agreements with 16 Caribbean governments. Moreover, although no formal agreement exists between Cuba and the United States, occasionally there is meaningful anti-drug cooperation between the two.

Anti-drug cooperation in the Caribbean is not just bilateral. As Table 2 indicates, some counter drug operations are truly multinational, even though on most occasions, U.S. involvement is the most significant and is critical to the success of the operations. Most of the multinational operations shown in Table 2 have been successes, measured in terms of seizures. Yet, multinational operations are subject to several of the cooperation challenges mentioned above, because of the various sovereignties, law enforcement practices, and bureaucracies involved.

In summary, then, these are some of the realities of Caribbean security as we greet the arrival of a new year and edge closer to the birth of a new century. It is a reality landscape characterized by complexity, change, and challenge; it is not a simple landscape, irrespective of where one stands or where one sits.

Ivelaw Griffith is an associate professor of political science and a Caribbean specialist at Florida International University. He recently authored Caribbean Security on the Eve of the 21st Century, INSS's McNair Paper No. 54. His coedited book Democracy and Human Rights in the Caribbean will be published Spring 1997 by Westview Press, and his sole-authored book Drugs and Security in the Caribbean: Sovereignty Under Siege will be published Summer 1997 by Penn State Press.

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